

**By Sharon Corcoran**  
*The Goodland Star-News*

Incoming planes at Renner Field are now able to use the crosswind runway at night, and pilots and will have a better view of where they are throughout the airport thanks to new lighting installed this year with state and federal grants.

Colored lights will tell pilots when they are about to run out of runway, and planes will be better able to land in bad weather.

EagleMed, an air ambulance service with a plane and crew based at the airport, has already been using the northeast-southwest crosswind runway, city officials say.

The project to put lights on the crosswind runway and replace the runway and taxiway lights on the main runway will be finished soon.

The crosswind and taxiway lights are done, said Darin Neufeld, engineer with Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates, and the first weekend of June work started on the northwest-southeast main runway.

The project will probably be done in three weeks, he said.

The crosswind and taxiway lights were done from July through December last year, he said, then work was suspended until May 1.

The new lights stand a little taller and a little brighter than the old ones, said Chuck Lutters, city public works director.

When planes are 1,000 feet down the runway, he said, pilots will see the lights change colors and know it's time to hit the brakes.

With the crosswind runway un-



## New lights line runway

Mike Schmidt drove the backhoe while excavating at Renner Field to hook up conduits for new runway lights. His brother Matt got into the trench with a shovel for more detailed digging. Both work for Strukel Electric of Girard. Blue lights (above) were installed along taxiway "A."

Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

lighted, he said, if there was too much crosswind, planes couldn't land.

Now they can.

It's a more usable airport at night, he said.

The improvements have especially been a benefit for EagleMed, said Lutters.

Their pilots use the crosswinds runway a lot.

The air ambulance can get out and pick up patients in Atwood and other area towns, he said, so the improvement will help the whole area.

No other airports in this area have the crosswinds lights, Lutters said, so if the crosswinds are too much, patients can be brought to the Goodland airport by ambulance, and the EagleMed plane can still take off.

The lights weren't a factor in EagleMed deciding to come to Goodland, Lutters said; they chose to come here because the airport has advanced instrument landing and navigation equipment.

The lights are just a plus, he said.

The project to replace the old lights and add lights to the crosswind runway was in the works before EagleMed came to Goodland, Lutters said, adding that he doesn't know whether having EagleMed helped the airport get the grants.

"I don't know whether that topped it," he said, "but it didn't hurt."

The project is costing \$401,686, said Mary Volk, city clerk, with the city paying \$60,820, the Kansas Department of Transportation paying \$103,255 and the Federal Aviation Administration paying \$237,611.

# Sherman County dispatch to add full-time position

**By Tom Betz**  
*The Goodland Star-News*

Sherman County dispatch will add a full-time position beginning in July with approval from the county commissioners last Tuesday.

Mary Messamore, dispatch department director, told the commissioners she was not getting enough interest to get a part-time dispatcher, and that it would be better to get full time worker.

"It takes 4 1/2 people to run the dispatch," Messamore said. "We are short, and with all the training it is hard to get a person to work the weekends."

The commissioners asked if there was money in the dispatch budget for going to a full-time position.

Messamore said there was enough money for the rest of the year, and she could ask for an increase for next year in the budget.

"It is better to have a full-time rather than do a lot of overtime," Commissioner Mitch Tiede said. "I am sure you can get some interest for a full time, especially with benefits."

"Give it a try," said Commissioner Kevin Rasure.

"Adding a full time person won't give you all the flexibility you want," warned Commissioner Chuck Thomas.

"It will still be tight," Messamore said, "but will make it better than now."

The commissioners asked if the 911 system upgrade was working,

and Messamore said it was not working as well as it should.

"We are getting all the 911 calls," she said. "In that sense the system is working, but we are not getting all the information we are supposed to get. I have told the Southwestern Bell people I will hold the \$83,000 payment until it is working smoothly."

In other business, the commissioners:

- Held a 20-minute closed session with County Assessor Terry Ballard. Afterward, Commissioner Tiede made a motion to accept a part-time contract with Ballard for the next four years at the same rate of \$40,000 per year plus benefits. The motion passed unanimously.
- Ballard had been put on hold after discussions last week, though there were no complaints about his work.
- Assessors are required by Kansas law to have special training, and most work for more than one county.
- Held a closed session with Curt Way, public works manager, on a personnel matter. No action was taken after the session.

- Asked Way about the status of County Road 17 south of Goodland, where the county road and bridge department had been working. Way said the crews were hauling gravel to put on Road 17, and on parts of Roads 63 and 22.
- Told Alex West, head of the Sherman County Racing Association, they would take a request about a beer garden under advisement. Tiede said the beer garden at the Fourth of July Freedom Fest is a trial, and the commissioners will wait until after that to consider the racing association request.
- The commissioners asked if the racing association had a plan for security. West said the plan was to put it in the same corner where the chamber is doing the one for Freedom Fest.
- "We'll see how it works for Freedom Fest," Rasure said.
- Approved a revised plan for the donation of sick leave. Rasure asked for a minor change to have the request approved by at least a quorum of the employee committee. That change was made and the policy was approved. The employee committee is made up of one

person from each department and a quorum would be six. An employee who is to receive donated sick time has to have worked for the county for a minimum of six months. County employees donating sick time cannot donate all their sick leave and must retain 10 days.

- Listened to Allan Langness, a landfill employee who had been terminated on June 8, at the end of his six-month probation period.

Langness told the commissioners he was surprised by the dismissal, and felt it was like he was ambushed. The commissioners asked if Langness wanted a formal hearing, but he said he was only asking them to listen.

Tiede said he understood there were no hard feelings, but that supervisors felt Langness wasn't

working out. Langness said he felt the termination might leave the perception he was an inadequate employee or a problem. Way said he told Langness after the termination that he would give him a good recommendation.

- Appointed Billy Hoyt as treasurer and Craig Hoyt as trustee for Llanos Township. These were vacancies not filled in the fall election, and the commissioners are empowered to fill the jobs.
- Approved an agreement to allow the Sunflower Extension District No. 6 to occupy the same office space as the Sherman County Extension Council has had in the courthouse.
- Appointed Dennis Daise as the county alternate on the High Plains Mental Health board.

## correction

A headline, "Ex-Cowboy takes team to basketball nationals," on Page 10a of the Friday, June 17, *The Goodland Star-News*, should have said the team went to baseball nationals. The headline was incorrect. This was an editing error.

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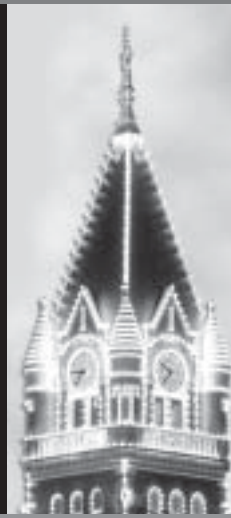
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